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Turning the Parts into a Whole

There is no learning situation in which comprehension should not be front and center. Teaching for understanding should be the essential goal of everything that takes place in the classroom.

To achieve this, what we refer to in this Guide as reading comprehension strategies should actually be seen as how-you-approach-everything strategies. More than reading strategies, they are thinking strategies, the desired "habits of mind" for every thoughtful person.

In other words, teachers should expect students to use higher order thinking skills – inferring, making connections, analyzing the way information is presented, etc. – on a regular basis.

If this is not the case, students will see the work they do on reading comprehension as separate and apart from the rest of their classroom work.

☛ Listen to a fifth grade teacher's description of how she integrates Synthesizing with previous strategies, and with writing, graphic organizers, classroom discussion, and reading assignments:

When I introduce Synthesizing to my 5th graders I start out with the definition of reflecting. (I use the sunshine-with-rays graphic organizer with the word "reflection" in the center.) I ask my students to give me words that define "reflection" such as thinking, remembering, etc., which I write on the rays. This year my students had already written a Reflective Essay before we did synthesizing, so they were familiar with the term. I also model reflections when I read aloud to them. I am constantly thinking out loud.

Now, however, as I read aloud they know that they too can verbalize their thoughts (and usually without raising their hands!). They might make a connection to another book I read aloud, or they might make a prediction, etc. But the point is, they are experienced "reflectors" because they see/hear/do reflections in various ways. Then I give them a meaty short story.... My students know how to use sticky notes and highlighters to "mark up the text," using codes. They know that reading is thinking and that proficient readers are constantly thinking while they are reading. The proof of this is in their notes. Once this is done they are ready to synthesize.

I tell them that synthesizing integrates all of the comprehension skills. I break synthesizing down into three parts:

- a brief summary (key word "brief"),
- reflection (such as text-to-self connections, inferences, questions they had while reading, or how the piece affected them),
- and an original idea, understanding, insight or thought.

That is usually the most difficult part, so I give them questions that prompt them to write brief responses:

What is the author's message? or
What is the story REALLY about? or
How has your understanding of the topic changed? or
What do you now know about this topic?

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Then I collect these written responses and (with their permission) make overheads of them (leaving out their names) and together we assess each piece:

- Is the summary longer than the other two parts put together? (It shouldn't be.)
- Is there reflection? (Key words: I think, I believe, I feel, etc.)
- Is there an original idea?

☛ A high school English teacher relates her efforts to engage her students with a variety of genres and approaches as she teaches a novel:

> I have been trying to incorporate more and more nonfiction into my Literature course. In one method that seems pretty successful during the pre-reading process, **I introduce various nonfiction articles that relate in some way to the text we are going to read**. For example, we just started reading **Frankenstein** within the "Creation" unit. A week before starting the book, we looked at a short bio of Mary Shelley and coded the text.
>
> **Then we looked at a map, which gave me the opportunity to discuss setting and geography.**
>
> **We also looked at and discussed and wrote about a painting by Blake called "Elohim Creating Adam" in which I taught imagery, which led to a poetry assignment.** It seems there are a lot of possibilities for incorporating other genres in a curriculum largely focused on fiction.

Both these teachers have created circumstances in which students have to think in order to succeed.

> In these classrooms r**eading comprehension is not separate from the rest of what students do**, but is directly embedded in the curriculum.

Things Take Time, Commitment

Is it any wonder it takes a while for students to use reading comprehension strategies productively? We're trying to create independent readers who interact with text meaningfully enough to either understand what they read or be clear about what and why they don't understand. This being the case, it should come as no surprise that it takes a long time for students to reach the Vygotskian stage of internalizing strategy use.

Consider, for example, the impact of systematic, ongoing instruction of one tool, Raphael's **Question-Answer-Relationship**, which Billemeyer and Barton (1998) refer to as a "strategy":

> Students who become skilled at this strategy recognize the relationship between the questions teachers ask and the answers they expect; therefore, they know where to find information needed for a correct response. Although teaching this strategy can take time, Richardson and Morgan (1994) report that students who learned and practiced this strategy for as little as eight weeks showed significant gains in reading comprehension (146).

"Learned and practiced...for as little as eight weeks"! That's two months of practice to have this one activity make a difference. **Clearly, introducing a strategy on Monday, teaching tools for implementing the strategy on Tuesday, practicing those tools for the rest of the week, then moving to a new strategy the following Monday just won't create strategic readers.**

More broadly, all this work pays off most effectively when an entire school community has committed to improving reading comprehension. If all the work's being done by the crazy lady in science class, with no reading comprehension instruction in the rest of the classes, it will be seen as an aberration, something that'll go away if we can just make it through this year. **A look at reading comprehension instruction from the standpoint of overall literacy instruction is illustrative.** Mosenthal, Lipson, et al. (2001) analyze what is required to improve elementary students' literacy skills:

> The commitment to literacy and literacy improvement within the high-performing schools has remained strong over an eight-to-ten-year period. There has been and continues to be extensive professional development and strong, stable leadership, whether from a teacher, a principal, or some other member of the community. The school community is focused and working toward a shared vision, with genuine respect and ongoing communication among the staff (7).

The work of the Vermont Strategic Reading Initiative bears out these findings about the time and commitment required to improve student reading. **There are no shortcuts. Improving student reading comprehension requires knowledgeable, committed leaders and teachers willing to integrate comprehension instruction into all subject areas, willing to learn from each other, and willing to give the work the time it requires, both within each classroom and throughout the school.**

It isn't always easy, avoiding the impulse to provide quick answers when students might independently call upon their knowledge of the reading strategies.

- A veteran high school math teacher comments: "I have been using this first quarter to begin to make my Algebra II students independent learners...they do not enjoy reading the math text for meaning...I have been an interpreter most of my teaching career...I realize now that although that makes my students very happy, it is not the best approach for them...I have been trying to redirect them to the text when they have a question rather than just "fixing" it for them...very difficult for me at times...takes extra time and is not my normal response so often I have to stop myself and think about how I should be responding...I have seen a few students beginning to accept this new responsibility...others want the old way back! Sometimes I do, too!"

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The Writing/Reading Strategies Connection

The connection between strategic reading and good writing is simple: Writing is feelings and thoughts made visible.

Scattered throughout this Guide are suggestions for writing: summarizing, jotting quick responses, elaborating on the ways connections support comprehension, etc. Such writing may provide the basis for a revised and polished piece of writing, but that is not its function for these activities. **Its function is to promote fluency through daily practice, to force the student to make a connection with what he/she is reading in terms of at least one of the nine reading strategies, and at times for the teacher to "check in" to see whether the student is understanding the text.**

Writing helps readers clarify their understanding of what they're reading, and makes visible their responses to that reading.

The switch between the brain and the hand that moves the pen is kept "on," just as the switches for listening, speaking and reading are always on. Writing, of course, is intentional. One has to decide to write, find writing implements, and be relatively still. As opposed to speaking, in writing one has to look at what one has "said."

The simplest way to use writing to enhance reading comprehension is to change the way discussions operate.

Teachers usually toss out a question about the reading. A few hands go up. One is called on, an answer given, and the discussion proceeds. **If, however, instead of looking for hands, the teacher asks everyone to jot a response to the question, he or she can now call on everyone.** Such questions, of course, can no longer be the "What was the date…?" or "Who knows the formula?" type questions. They will be questions calling for thinking; they may be questions that call for students to peruse the reading. **In any case, they will be questions that all can reasonably be expected to answer successfully, and they will be questions that generate further discussion, not "Guess-what's-in-my-head" questions.**

An interesting connection between strategic reading and effective writing lies in the emphasis of each on audience. Good readers understand what the author is trying to say; better readers can infer the author's purpose and audience, determining why he or she said it that way, organized it that way, presented it that way.

Strategies such as **Explore Inferences, Determine Important Ideas and Themes,** and **Analyze Text Structure** all focus on this aspect of thinking about text. The revelations of such work easily transfer to writing, as teachers ask students to write for a specific audience, perhaps a letter to the editor, a feature article for general interest magazines, or a press release promoting a school activity. What they have learned about how text works can inform how they write; what they learn about writing for an audience can inform what they understand about how authors make their decisions.

To demonstrate the impact of presumed audience, ask students to write brief notes to their friends addressing their feelings toward the act of writing.

Then ask them to write brief notes to their teachers addressing their feelings toward the act of writing. Compare the two letters, analyzing how the

vocabulary changes when the student is no longer writing for a friend, but for an adult authority figure. Then ask the students to write the introduction to a textbook on writing in which the authors attempt to address students' feelings about writing.

Notes

"Jot" Vs. "Write"

Many students are reluctant to write. By suggesting that students "jot" instead of "write" as they read, and encouraging them to review their jottings for ideas or facts they may wish to develop further, the process becomes more authentic. This is not writing that the teacher will review, but for the student's own use!

When the writing belongs to the student, it tends to be livelier than work generated with a teacher's corrections – or grade – in mind, as does writing where the student has chosen the topic. **A goal in any course should be that students take notes, and actually use their notebooks.** So writing assignments and tests can be centered around the knowledge the student has accumulated in his/her notebook. **Many teachers, wanting to encourage thoughtful responses rather than testing to see what students have memorized, offer "open notebook" tests.**

English teachers shouldn't be the only ones asking students to use writing to enhance their reading comprehension.

A mathematics teacher's comment makes the point succinctly: "The only way to ensure that someone has mastered a concept is to ask that person to put it in writing. It's not enough that students can solve a problem; they need to be able to explain **how** they solved it."

In reference to the strategies, students can be asked to jot in their notebooks brief responses to the text.

Groups of three or four students can read their jottings to each other, sharing their insights and learning from each other's observations. Perhaps the teacher can request a representative sample of this work every two weeks or so, and maybe once a month ask students to draft and revise a paper based on one or more of their jottings.

Several Writing Prompts to Encourage Intense Experience with Each Strategy

Frame it as you will, and by all means explore – perhaps brainstorming with students – additional ways to connect reading strategies to student writing. What follows is just the start of what might be a fairly long list of practical applications. To save space, several suggestions for each strategy are offered in single paragraphs. Pick, choose, and add to these lists!

Imagine: Take on the persona and voice of the author of the text. Write a parody. Take the main idea behind today's reading and turn it into a limerick. Create a newspaper headline that captures the main idea of the day's reading.

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Make Connections: Write a personal anecdote that comes to mind when you read the text. Explain the relevance of today's reading to your own life. Write a letter to a friend in which you explain why he/she needs to "connect" with the text. Write an essay that connects a statement in the text to a current event.

Analyze Structure: Write a brief review of the text, explaining how it is organized. Write a commentary on how the text is organized, explaining why the structure is helpful or how it might be improved. Take a piece of your own writing, and analyze its structure.

Recognize Words and Understand Sentences: Make a list of words and sentences you do not understand. Share this list with a partner and see whether the two of you can come up with definitions/ understanding. Take a piece of your own writing, and list the words and sentences that you think are most challenging to another reader. Discuss this list with a partner.

Explore Inferences: List all inferences you notice in the reading. If you can detect any hidden agendas in the text, explain them in writing. Write a letter in the voice of the author that makes inferences regarding the importance of his/her book/text.

Ask Questions: Write a letter to the author, outlining your questions about the text. If you infer a hidden agenda within the text, write the questions you think a lawyer might ask the author in a cross-examination. Keep a list of the questions you're asking yourself as you read the text. Discuss with a friend.

Determine Important Ideas and Themes: Before reading the text, spend five minutes skimming it in any way you see fit, then write what you think are the most important ideas and themes. Write a persuasive paragraph that supports or attacks the important idea/theme of today's reading. Keep a journal of the most important ideas and themes you encounter.

Evaluate, Summarize, Synthesize: Write a brief personal response to today's reading. Write a summary of what you read today. Write any ideas you have that may have sprung from today's reading.

Reread and Adjust: As you are reading the text, keep track of how many times you reread and adjust. When you stop reading, write a journal entry that explains the strategies you used, especially where and how you adjusted your approach to the text. Write a short paragraph about a piece of your own writing, exploring where you think a reader might want to "reread and adjust."

Applying a Vermont Writing Rubric to Student Reading

Vermont Strategic Reading Initiative

Notes

Most Vermont students are familiar with Vermont's Writing Rubrics, which have been used to critique student writing throughout the state. **By breaking the writing process down into specific areas, rubrics help students take an in-depth look at how they write and what they can do to write better.**

But in a larger sense they give students a lens through which to view how writing works – any writing, by any writer. For many students, assessing their textbooks with one of the rubrics that has traditionally been used to assess their writing is a novel, empowering concept!

The Vermont Strategic Reading Initiative has adapted a rubric to help students better understand the material they are asked to read. **Putting students in charge of evaluating classroom texts – textbooks, articles, procedural manuals, etc. – can help improve their reading comprehension in a variety of ways:**

- It can **boost student confidence** by providing a vehicle for textual analysis they are already familiar with;
- It **gives students a different lens with which to study the material** as they, for example, look at the relationship between details and purpose;
- It **provides students with insight into the way information is organized** in the reading, thereby helping them read future assignments more efficiently;
- It **helps students reflect on themselves as readers** as they try to read for meaning;
- In addition, it **provides teachers with insight into strengths and weaknesses of the reading materials** they're assigning.

This rubric is based on Vermont Standard 1.5: "Students draft, revise, edit, and critique written products so that final drafts are appropriate in terms of the following dimensions:

Purpose – Intent is established and maintained within the writing.

Organization – The writing demonstrates order and coherence.

Details – Details contribute to development of ideas and information, evoke images, or otherwise elaborate on or clarify the content of the writing.

Voice or Tone – An appropriate voice or tone is established and maintained."

The following rubric is often used to assess student writing:

	5	4	3	2	1
PURPOSE	Clear, consistent Focus & intent	Clear focus and intent	Focus and intent are usually clear	Focus and intent are not very clear	No focus; intent difficult to discern
ORGANIZATION	Clear, predictable presentation	Clearly sequenced	Organization sometimes confusing	Confusing	No sense of organization
DETAILS	Details illuminate the information	Details explain the information	Details aid understanding	More, or better, details would help	No details
VOICE/ TONE	Consistent, engaging Voice or Tone throughout	Voice or tone encourages reader to "stick with it"	Voice or Tone fails to engage reader	Voice or Tone inconsistent	No Sense of Voice or Tone

How Can Teachers Use Writing Rubrics To Change the Way Students Read?

Notes

It may seem that students are looking for what the Rubric refers to as "Details" when they read, in that they're looking for the important "facts" that may be on a test or quiz. **Using this rubric to evaluate text, however, can help students see that facts/details are important only insofar as they "contribute to development of ideas and information…or otherwise elaborate on or clarify the content of the writing."**

> Thus, it quickly becomes clear that in assigned reading, as in their own writing, the overall Purpose and Organization have to be determined before the reader can make sense of the Details.

Asking students to look at their reading through these four lenses helps them understand, analyze and interpret what they're reading.

* For example, when students determine the **Purpose** of a selection they may better understand the main point.
* When students study the **Organization** of the information, they can see how it all fits together to make that point.
* When they look for **Details**, they begin to understand the way these relate to the Purpose and Organization, rather than serving as isolated facts to be memorized for a quiz.
* Looking for **Voice and Tone** will often help students better understand the author's purpose, and the discourse features of the subject they're studying.

Note: Teachers might also give students the genre-specific Vermont Writing Rubrics and/or Writing Benchmarks, as appropriate: Response to Literature, Report, Narrative, Procedure, Persuasive, and/or Personal Essay. Science and Math teachers have found the Report-Writing and Procedure-Writing Rubrics to be very useful. Some Social Studies teachers have used the Narrative and Report Benchmarks effectively.

Suggested Activities

1. Review the Rubrics.
2. Give the students a manageable, coherent unit of material to read – such as a several-page-long subunit in your textbook, an article, or some other somewhat self-contained document that will have a clear purpose, organization, and a number of details for students to connect with the purpose and organization.
3. Ask the students to use the "Writing/Reading Rubric" to evaluate the reading for Purpose, Organization, Details and Voice/Tone. You can ask them to work individually or in pairs or small groups, depending on what works best in your class.
4. Discuss findings, recording ideas (and disagreements) on an overhead or whiteboard.
5. Discuss what this exercise has shown that students need to consider when reading this particular textbook, magazine, author, etc.

Vermont Strategic Reading Initiative
The Writing/Reading Rubric

	Score	Evidence
Purpose (Intent is established and maintained.)		Quote(s) to establish, page_____ : Quote(s) to maintain, page(s)_____:
Organization (Demonstrates order and coherence.)		Organizing Topics (as revealed in Headings and Subheadings, Topic Sentences, etc):
Details (Contribute to development of ideas and information, evoke images, or otherwise elaborate on or clarify the content of the writing.)		Summarize details here in order of importance:
Voice/Tone (Appropriate voice or tone is maintained.)		Explain one or two features; quote brief examples:

Where To Start? How to Keep Tabs?

A series of instruments to help teachers and students improve their understanding of reading comprehension follows.

1. **A Needs Assessment tool for teacher and school-level self-evaluation in the area of reading, across all subject areas.**
   Sue Biggam developed this tool as a first step for looking at a system-wide reading initiative. A number of schools have used this to prioritize steps toward improving literacy instruction.

2. **"Close Monitoring of Literacy Progress" enables individual teachers, teacher teams or full faculties to isolate gaps in student knowledge and skills that can guide both instruction and curriculum development.**
   This has been developed and piloted by Sue Biggam of the Vermont Reads Institute.

3. **The Strategy Instruction Checklist can be used by individuals or groups of individuals to monitor their actual reading comprehension strategy instruction over a weeklong period.**
   Nick Boke of the Vermont Strategic Reading Initiative developed this document, which has been used by full faculties in several Vermont schools.

4. **The "Comprehension Interview" can be used by teachers or students to evaluate application of each of the nine reading strategies.**
   The Millers Run School Literacy Team and Nancy Woods adapted this useful interview from Ellin Oliver Keene's "Major Point Interview."

5. **Landmark College's "Baseline Survey of Teacher Knowledge and Skills" enables teachers to determine areas of strength and weakness. The results of this survey can guide individual and/or group professional development programming.**
   This was developed by Linda Hecker and Marie Breheny of the National Institute of Landmark College in Putney, Vermont with Eisenhower Grant funds, and has been used to orient professional development in a number of Vermont schools.

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Needs Assessment Tool

Purpose: This Needs Assessment tool provides a resource for teacher and school-level self-evaluation in the area of reading, in all classes, across all subject areas.

1. Complete the survey. Check one box for each item.
2. Compile and analyze the results. What patterns do you see?
3. Use your findings, along with an analysis of student achievement, to help guide action planning, professional development and program planning—to strengthen reading comprehension among students in grades 4-12.

How effective are our programs/efforts (regarding the following factors related to strengthening reading)…..	Minimally	To some degree/ variable	Fairly well & quite consistently	Very well, consistently
Part 1. School wide factors				
a) Our literacy initiative has clear and agreed-upon goals for teachers and students.				
b) Our literacy initiative has effective leadership and organizational structures, data-driven decision-making, and participatory decision-making processes.				
c) Our literacy initiative is defined in a way that connects it to the larger educational program.				
d) Our literacy initiative provides focused, sustained and ongoing teacher professional development.				
e) Our literacy initiative has a clear process for program review and evaluation.				
f) Our literacy initiative includes effective supplementary help and/or interventions, taught by skilled teachers, for students who are struggling. Collaborative teams work together to ensure coordination.				
g) The school's literacy curriculum is coherent and well-coordinated across grades and classes.				

continued on the next page

How effective are our programs/efforts (regarding the following factors related to strengthening reading)…..	Minimally	To some degree/ variable	Fairly well & quite consistently	Very well, consistently
Part 2: Individual Teacher's Literacy – related activities				
a) Students are actively encouraged to thoughtfully apply reading strategies as they read.				
b) Literacy activities use high quality materials at a range of levels and including a variety of genres, student-student interaction and an engaging environment.				
c) Students are supported in developing an understanding of text structures, text features and discourse features, and how they can influence understanding of text.				
d) Vocabulary is taught actively, with connections drawn to students' prior knowledge, and with multiple repetitions.				
e) When students are asked to respond to what is read, a variety of approaches are used (different forms of written response, discussion, other oral responses, etc.).				
f) Assessments used are linked with standards, include student self-assessment, and are used to inform instruction.				
g) There is sufficient time for students to read, and a range of approaches are used before reading, during reading and after reading to help students comprehend what they read.				
h) Connections between reading and writing are highlighted, so that students learn to "read like writers" and "write like readers."				

Needs that emerged as top priorities?

Other factors to take into account?

Adapted 7/17/02 by Sue Biggam and others at the VT Reads Institute—from the "Adolescent Literacy Support Framework," The Education Alliance at Brown University. Revised 4/04.

Close Monitoring of Literacy Progress:
Planning Tailored to Students' Needs (Gr 4-8)

Student: _____ Date: _____ Grade: ____ Staff involved: _____

Areas of Focus	What do we know about the student's achievement/progress in this area?	Now what? (What adjustments or interventions are needed? How will this take place: who/when?)	How will we gauge progress? What indicators or assessment data will we use; what will we be looking for?
Phonics/decoding			
Fluency			
Vocabulary			
Comprehension of fiction - (oral responses)			
Written Response to Literature			
Comprehension of non-fiction/content area text (oral responses)			
Written responses to nonfiction/content areas (test questions, summaries, etc.)			
Other written responses (procedures, personal essays, etc.)			
Spelling			
Mechanics, usage and grammar			
Other: memory, attention _____			

Draft 3/03, Susan C. Biggam Vermont READS Institute.

VSRI Strategy Instruction Check List

For each day, mark "D" for each time you gave direct instruction in the strategy, "I" for each time you integrated strategy use into content instruction, and "M" for each time you mentioned the strategy.

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Imagine					
Make Connections					
Analyze Text Structure					
Recognize Words and Understand Sentences					
Explore Inferences					
Ask Questions					
Determine Important Ideas and Themes					
Evaluate, Summarize and Synthesize					
Reread and Adjust Approaches to Text					

Name_____

Dates_____

Subject and Topic(s) Studied_____

Nick Boke, Vermont Strategic Reading Initiative, 2003.

Comprehension Interview

Strategy	Questions	Student Response	Rubric
Imagine, Using a Variety of Senses (Creates mental images of characters, events and/or ideas.)	-What did you picture in your mind? -What did the characters look like? -What could you draw to illustrate that idea?		1 No response. 2 Image is unrelated to text. 3 Image is closely matched with text. 4 Image further clarifies complex ideas or anomalies.
Make Connections (Makes connections to personal experiences, previous knowledge or other texts that s/he has read.)	-What did you think about when you read that part of the story? -Did it remind you of something you already know, or an experience you've had or another book? Tell me about it.		1 No response or "I don't know." 2 Response is not related to text. 3 Response related to background knowledge & personal experience. 4 Response enhances comprehension.
Analyze Text Structure (Uses text features and structures to discriminate among genres.)	-What did you notice about this text? -What makes this book different from others? -Are there facts, stories, poems, etc.? -What is this author's style of writing or craft?		1 No response or "I don't know." 2 Responds by noting text features particular to the genre. 3 Identifies the text genre. 4 Identifies the particular author's craft.
Recognize Words and Understand Sentences (Uses decoding strategies and monitors sentence comprehension.)	-What can you do when you cannot read aword? -What can you do to make the sentence make sense? -What else can you do to help you understand?		1 No response or "I don't know." 2 Fix-up strategies do not clear up confusion. 3 Fix-up strategies help construct meaning 4 Automatically uses fix-up strategies.
Explore Inferences (Reads "between the lines," draws conclusions.)	-What did the author mean by _____? -What made you think of that? -What were you thinking when the text said _____?	**Continued on the next page**	1 No response or "I don't know." 2 Response is literal. 3 Response is logical. 4 Response shows inferential thinking.

Comprehension Interview

continued from previous page

Strategy	Questions	Student Response	Rubric
Ask Questions (Asks questions while reading to clarify meaning or extend understanding.)	-What did you wonder about as you were reading? -What questions did you ask yourself ? -What confusion did you have?		1 No response or an unrelated question. 2 Literal question with short answer or word level. 3 Open-ended question. 4 Higher-order question that represents complex thinking about text.
Determining Important Ideas and Themes (Provides short statements that capture main idea and related details.)	-What is this part mainly about? -In one or two sentences, what is this book about?		1 No response or "I don't know." 2 Names many details, does not cite main ideas. 3 Response captures main idea. 4 Response captures theme.
Evaluate, Summarize, Synthesize (Considers main points, constructs main idea and related details.)	-What do you think about what you read? -Could the author be right (or wrong) about what s/he said?		1 No response or "I don't know." 2 Limited response, little or no elaboration. 3 Elaborate response. 4 Response provides evidence.
Reread and Adjust Approaches to the Text (Modify pace and rhythm, take notes, reread.)	-What did you do when the reading was more difficult? -What else could you do?		1 No response or "I don't know." 2 Try it again. 3 Slow down, reread. 4 Take notes for later clarification.

Adapted by Millers Run School & N. Woods, Vt. READS Institute, from Dr. D.J. Richardson and Keene's (1997) Major Point Interview.

Landmark College
Eisenhower Grant Baseline Survey
Of Teacher Knowledge and Skills

A. Instructions: Please circle the one best response below for each item corresponding to your agreement or disagreement with each statement at this point in time.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Understanding the reading demands of different types and levels of text				
1. I am familiar with the reading demands of different types of text: author's purpose, vocabulary, syntax, use of figurative language, and organizational patterns.	1	2	3	4
2. I know how to assess levels of text difficulty in terms of appropriateness for my students.	1	2	3	4
Identifying diverse student learning styles and needs				
1. I know how to identify diverse student learning styles:				
a. Auditory learners	1	2	3	4
b. Visual learners	1	2	3	4
c. Tactile/kinesthetic learners	1	2	3	4
d. Social learners	1	2	3	4
2. I know how to meet the needs of diverse student learning styles:				
a. Auditory learners	1	2	3	4
b. Visual learners	1	2	3	4
c. Tactile/kinesthetic learners	1	2	3	4
d. Social learners	1	2	3	4
Understanding how cognitive contructs affect students' ability to understand text				
1. I have good knowledge of how attention, memory, and language functioning affect students' abilities to understand text.	1	2	3	4

continued on the next page

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Planning instructional design to address diverse learning needs and styles				
1. I know how to plan instructional design to meet students' diverse learning needs and styles, incorporating the following techniques that support students' understanding, retention, and application of various types of information:				
a. Advance organizers	1	2	3	4
b. Activators	1	2	3	4
c. Classroom routines				
d. Clear and visible directions	1	2	3	4
e. Questioning protocols	1	2	3	4
f. Multisensory strategies	1	2	3	4
g. Summarizing activities	1	2	3	4
h. Reflective activities that foster students' metacognition	1	2	3	4
Knowing techniques for improving students' comprehension of text				
1. I have good knowledge of the following research-proven techniques that improve students' comprehension of texts:	1	2	3	4
a. Word identification strategies	1	2	3	4
b. Vocabulary development activities	1	2	3	4
c. Multipass strategies (SQ3R, POSSE, etc.)	1	2	3	4
d. Strategies that help students monitor comprehension while reading.	1	2	3	4
e. Teacher modeling and "think-alouds"	1	2	3	4
f. Active reading techniques such as highlighting, margin noting, underlining, and chunking	1	2	3	4
g. Paraphrasing and summarizing	1	2	3	4
h. Use of reading logs and writing templates	1	2	3	4
i. Teacher-led questioning and class discussion	1	2	3	4
j. Role-playing, debates and other forms of social learning	1	2	3	4
k. Diverse ways to represent text structure, such as outlining, mind mapping and 3-dimensional models	1	2	3	4
l. Responsive and reflective writing	1	2	3	4

continued on the next page

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Knowing techniques for improving students' ability to interpret visually-represented information				
1. I am familiar with research-proven techniques to help students interpret visually-represented information				
a. Explicit instruction in components of graphic representation	1	2	3	4
b. Verbalization of graphic information	1	2	3	4

B: Instructions: Please indicate whether or not you've had formal professional development experience (workshops, conference sessions, courses) in each of the following areas:

I have had formal training in the following areas:	Yes/No	If yes, Year	Length of Time (e.g.,1 day, semester)
Understanding the reading demands of different types of text			
Identifying diverse student learning styles and needs			
Understanding how cognitive constructs affect students' ability to understand text			
Planning instructional design to address diverse learning needs and styles			
Developing techniques for improving students' comprehension of texts			
Developing techniques for improving students' ability to interpret visually-represented information			

continued on the next page

Other Professional Development Experience

1. Please describe training you've had relevant to the project goals of developing students' comprehension of texts

   a. Workshops, conferences or courses

   b. Less formal training/mentoring

   c. Personal reading

   d. Training on topics not mentioned above, but which might be relevant to the project (for example, improving students' writing skills)

Demographic information

1. Name of school _____
2. Subject area(s) you teach _____
3. How long have you been teaching? _____
4. How long have you been teaching in your community? _____

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